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PPB 1521

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Registry
70-3916/1

5 AUG 1970

Vice Admiral Noel Gayler, USN
Director, National Security Agency
Fort George G. Meade, Maryland 20755

Dear Noel:

Thank you for your letter of 23 July 1970. I too hope that NPIC participation in the COINS network will make a contribution to the problems which confront us in the development of the system.

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I have asked that a concerted effort be made to sort out our problems with COINS and chart a clear course for the future. I expect this to be accomplished within the next few weeks, after which we shall be in touch with you.

Sincerely,

s/ Dick

Richard Helms
Director

ExDir/LKW:blp
Distribution:
Original - Addressee
1 - ER
1 - DD/I
1 - D/DCI/NIPE
1 - D/NPIC
1 - D/PPB
1 - DDI Planning Staff

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GROUP 1
downgrading and
declassification

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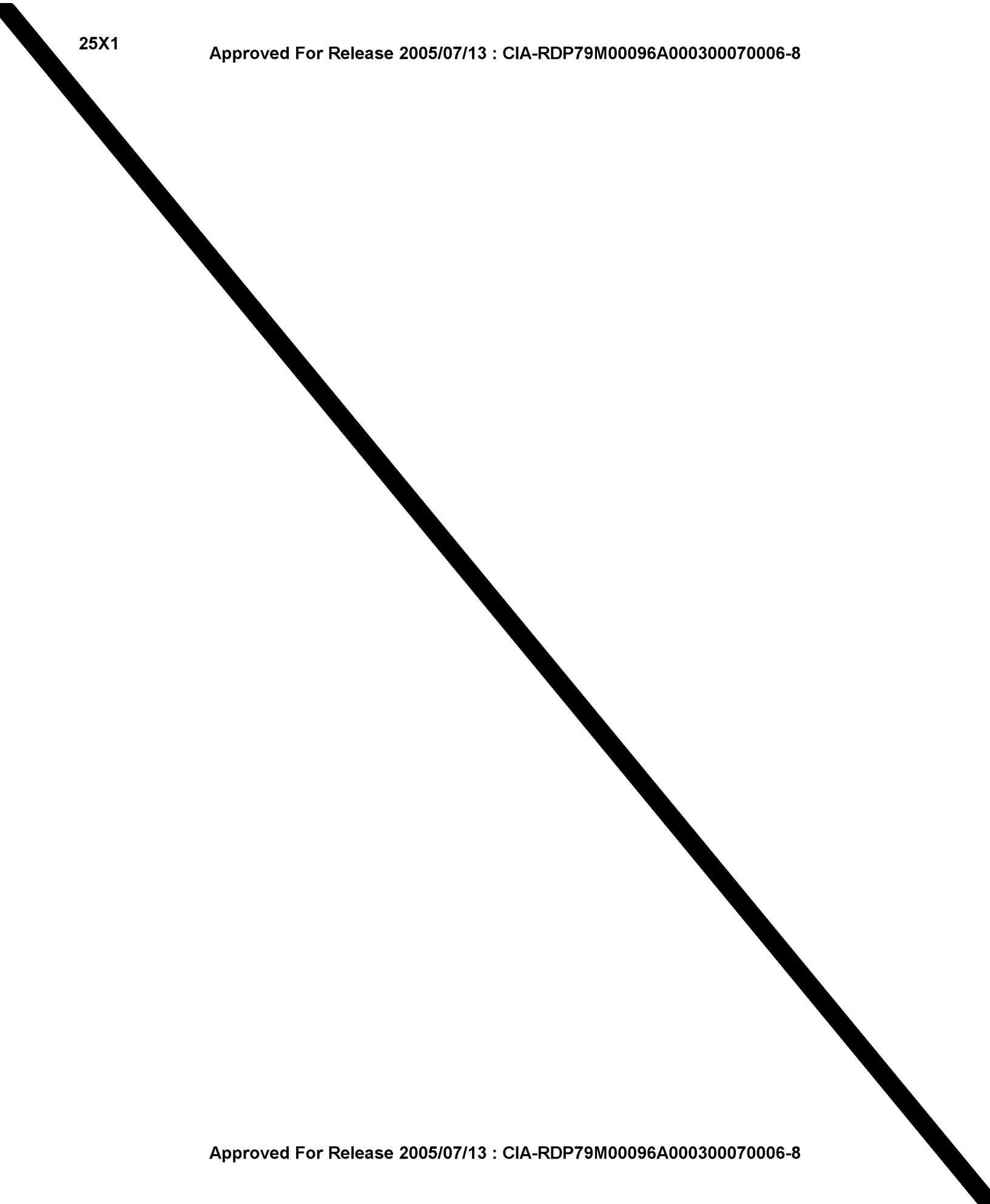

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5 August 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR: CIA COINS Subsystem Manager
CIA Member, Intelligence Information Handling Committee
Chairman, Information Processing Board

SUBJECT : COINS Computer System Planning

1. This memorandum is concerned with the means for providing all-day Headquarters participation in COINS. At the outset, it should be emphasized that a change in the Headquarters computer set-up for COINS is highly desirable even without the all-day requirement. The cost of our current schedule of devoting three hours on the IBM 360/67 each working day to COINS is about $26,000 per month. More important is the loss of the computer during these hours to those in the Agency who have come to depend on it for on-line program development, file handling, and computational support.

2. I believe that the Agency should acquire a computer for Headquarters participation in COINS; that this computer should be dedicated to COINS and to other applications requiring external access; and that CRS should be given the responsibility for operating it. What follows is an attempt to justify this recommendation. The discussion is limited to fundamental assumptions and options; there is no COINS history nor is there an analysis of all the alternatives. Even with these simplifications, the problem remains a difficult one to reduce to manageable terms.

3. There are two fundamental assumptions on which this memorandum is based. If either is wrong, the remaining points are invalid:

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Excluded from automatic downgrading and declassification

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7. Because I prefer the dedicated COINS computer option, the difficulty just noted should be addressed. The second assumption, the validity of community access to computer files, comes into play here. If accepted, this assumption forces us to acknowledge that the cost of the COINS computer must be accepted not just as a price for "going along" with a community file concept, but as the price for self-imposed security constraints. In other words we should not only ask is COINS worth it, but also ask is the protection of [redacted] (et al) data worth it? To the latter question, it seems we should say yes. This question should not be shifted to the hopeful "can't the technicians find a way to . . . . ?" In short, the security costs are present in all the options open to us; in the COINS computer option, they are just more visible.

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8. Final question: What should be the COINS computer and who should operate it? I believe the organization given responsibility to operate this computer should have the authority to select it and develop the necessary software. I recommend that CRS do this; the COINS objectives, at least as defined by CIA, are within the CRS mission. Although CIRIS and perhaps other follow-on requirements for external access do not fit this argument, I believe these applications should also be handled on the COINS computer for the reasons noted above. In any case, I would expect COINS to dominate this group of applications. CRS should be given the funds and any logistical and technical help they feel they need to develop a COINS system. CRS would continue to be responsible for the COINS data base. OCS would provide them with a copy of that portion of the CIRIS data base which is authorized for outside access. A stand-alone computer to handle COINS and CIRIS would cost between $21,000 and $36,000 per month, depending on the configuration chosen and on software, reliability, compatability factors. Three potential systems are detailed in Attachment 2.

9. A list of several other alternatives which have been considered (and reconsidered) for all-day COINS service at Headquarters is given in Attachment 3. For convenience, they are grouped and discussed in five general categories. The comments are

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subjective and are tied to the assumptions and arguments in this memorandum. Additional information on these alternatives and their many variants is available in OCS.

10. Again, I would like to emphasize that even without external prodding, a change in current COINS procedures in Headquarters is highly desirable.

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Acting Director of Computer Services

Attachments: a/s

cc: D/CRS

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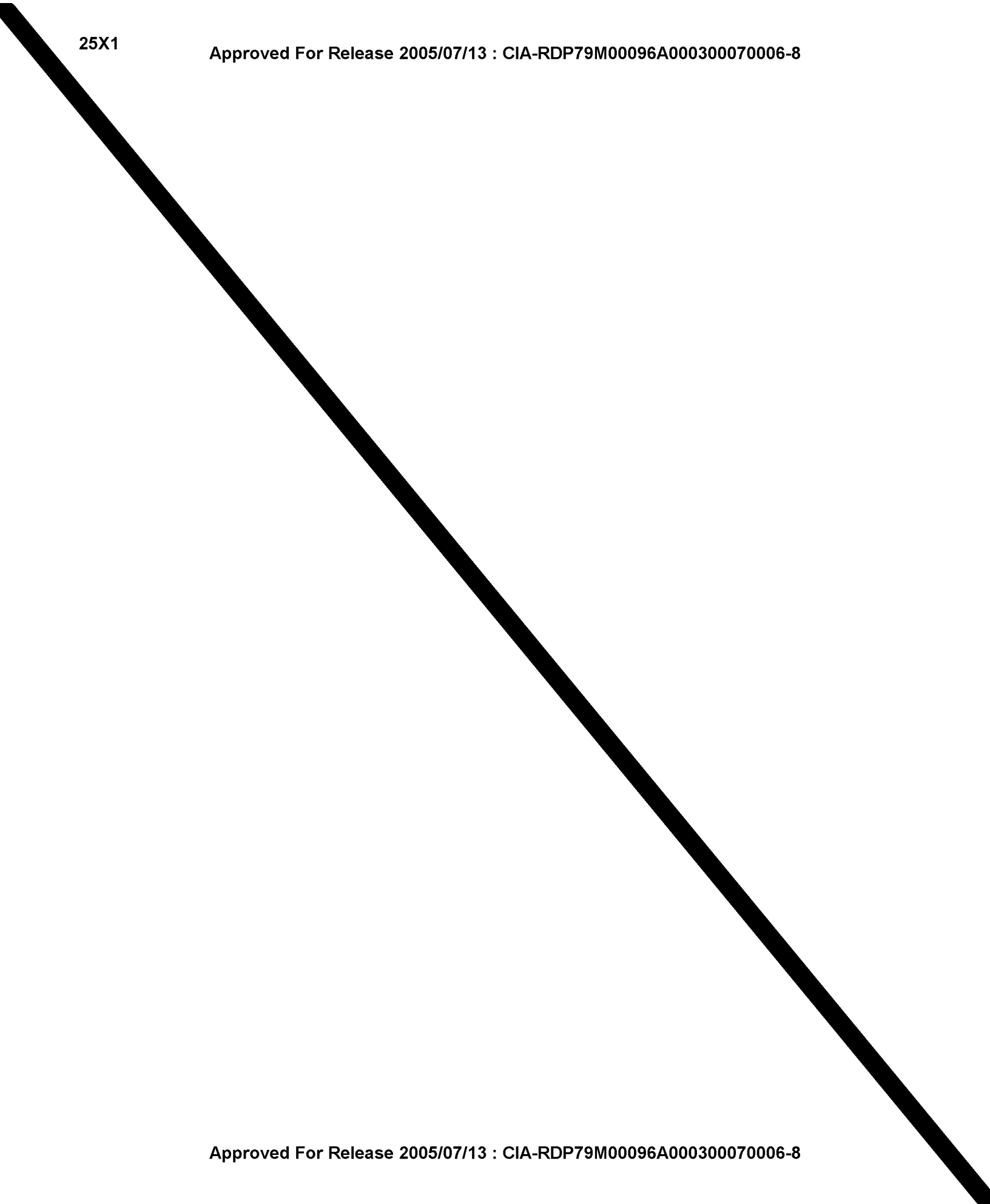

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Attachment 2

Alternate Stand-Alone COINS/CIRIS Computer Systems

One UNIVAC and two IBM systems are listed here as possibilities for a stand-alone COINS/CIRIS computer. These vendors were considered because of the relative ease with which existing COINS software could be employed.

UNIVAC 494

The configuration listed in Table 1 is required for a minimal UNIVAC 494 System which could accommodate COINS and CIRIS files and take advantage of NPIC developed software with little or no change. A program to convert files to UNIVAC 494 format would be required. (Also, software changes may be necessary to handle a newer, logically different operator console.) This system would cost about $36,000 per month. It includes only two terminals; additional terminals and variations in storage units could change the price somewhat. A configuration tailored to NSA UNIVAC 494 software has not been analyzed.

Assuming that NPIC or NSA software remains stable, in-house maintenance of software would require one systems programmer, less than full-time. Probably two computer operators would be required.

Note: the physical characteristics of some of the UNIVAC devices may present unusual installation problems (i.e., height of some devices, weight of drum).

If this computer was chosen, it would provide some degree of off-site backup for NPIC batch processing. With the addition of some peripheral devices, significant NPIC backup would be available. Its normal utility for non-COINS work at night at Headquarters would be minimal.

IBM 360/40

The configuration listed in Table 2 is required for a minimal IBM 360 System which could accommodate COINS and CIRIS files

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under TSMON--the software now used for Headquarters COINS operation. This is a Model 40 System, costing about $22,000 per month. It includes five terminals and no capability to do IBM batch processing in the background, but some capability to do batch processing when COINS is off the air.

The GIMS software now being studied in OCS and the RECON software now being studied in CRS may be appropriate follow-on to the TSAR retrieval program now used in COINS. If either were adopted, TSMON and the existing COINS communications software would have to be replaced as well.

A more expensive 360/40 configuration is shown in Table 3. This provides additional core storage (384,000 bytes of core instead of 256,000), which would provide for some expansion and better batch capability. The cost of this system is about $26,000 per month.

Assuming TSMON and TSAR continued in use, software maintenance can be performed by systems programmers now in OCS or CRS. Two operators would probably be required.

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Attachment 3

OTHER METHODS FOR HEADQUARTERS PARTICIPATION IN COINS

Group 1. Headquarters contributed COINS files on a Headquarters computer. COINS to share the computer with other applications. All day operation.

Put Headquarters contributed COINS files on

a. CRS 360/50, or
b. OCS 360/65-2, or
c. OCS 360/65-3, or
d. OCS 360/67.

Headquarters access to these and other COINS files would be through existing terminals. This computer would be connected to the DIA switch. In each case the COINS communications software would have to be modified to work with the operating system used by these computers for their other applications (3 to 9 man months). The computers are listed in order of increasing difficulty in this area. No additional equipment would be needed, although COMCET may be useful. All these computers now either process data at a security level not approved for COINS or process Agency-sensitive data. Unless there is significant reallocation of tasks, all these options contradict the assumption in paragraph 3a.

Group 2. Headquarters contributed COINS files on an Agency computer outside Headquarters. COINS to share the computer with other applications. All day operation.

Put Headquarters contributed COINS files on

a. NPIC 494, or
b. ORD 360/50.

Headquarters access to these and other COINS files by

c. existing terminals via patch panel or COMCET, to outside computer, or
d. special terminals, via data concentrator, to outside computer.

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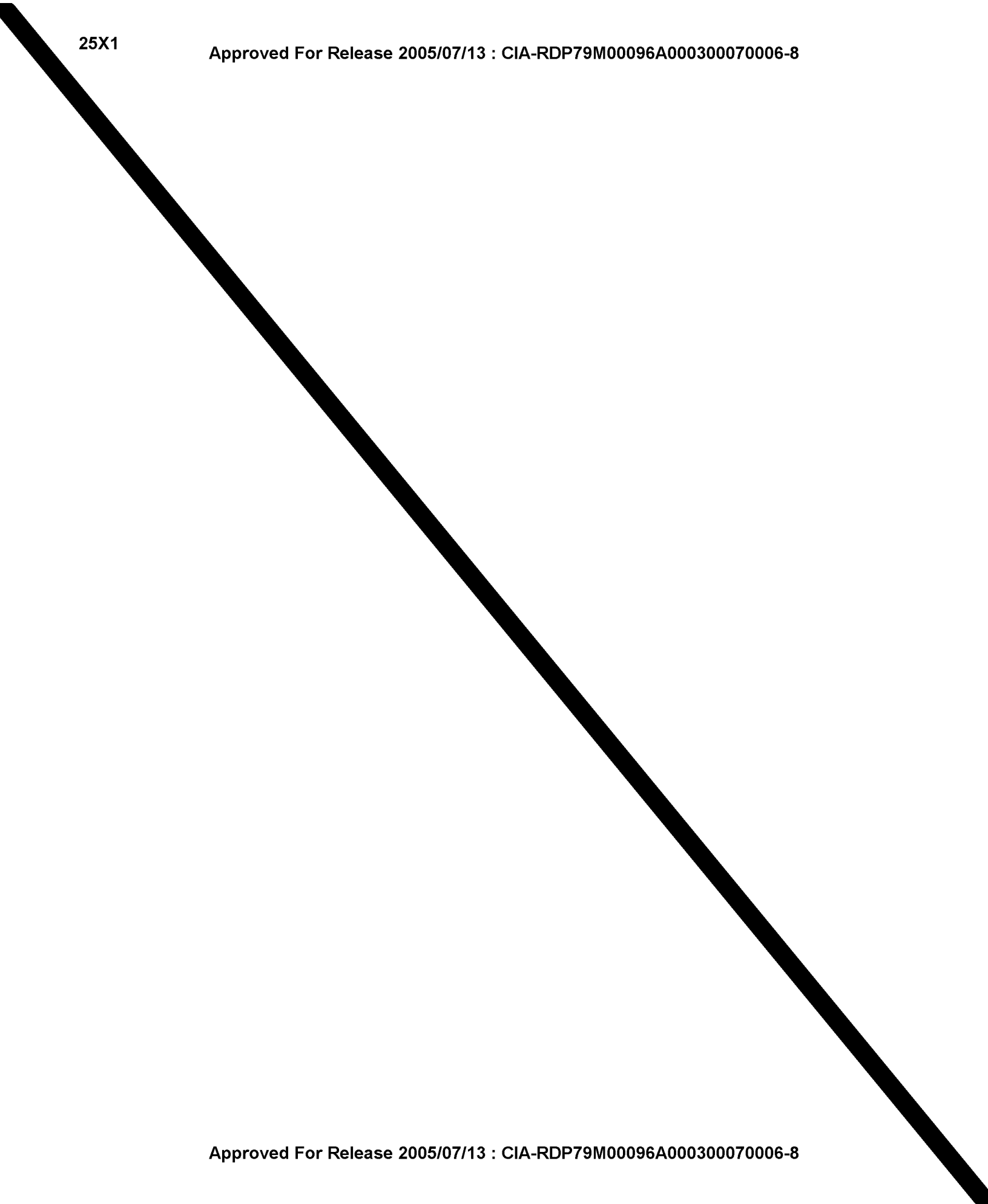

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Group 5. Same as Group 1, but scheduled operation.

Put Headquarters contributed COINS files on the most modest IBM Headquarters computer available which could handle the COINS application. When this computer is connected to the DIA switch, Agency-sensitive files and connections to other equipment would be disabled. This is our current COINS procedure, except the loss of internal capability would be minimized.